

Honorable Members of the House Committee on Government Operations,

I am a single (widowed) mother of three, currently employed in a long-term care facility, and I am writing to you as a voting, taxpaying citizen of Michigan.

I have been speaking out against jailing medical marijuana users for nearly twenty years, since discovering that the herb brought my alcoholic husband closer to sanity: calmed his rage, allowed him to sleep, helped him to decrease and even stop his liquor intake for short periods of time. He was not a person who would go to others for assistance, but cannabis helped him to help himself. If he had had an uninterrupted supply — the ability to grow his own or simply to buy it from a reliable, affordable source without fear of losing his property, children, and freedom — I believe he might've had a chance to survive, rather than drinking himself to suicide. But of course I'll never know that for sure. At the very least, it brought him and his family some measure of peace when he was able to make use of it.

I have educated myself on the history and effects of both cannabis and its prohibition, and I discovered that study after study, statistic after statistic, confirmed my personal experience and conclusions — cannabis is not only not very harmful, it is actively beneficial for a variety of conditions.

The lives of seriously ill folks are difficult enough. Their financial resources are often exhausted by medical bills; they endure persistent pain, loss of physical strength and skills, fear and uncertainty about their future prospects, unimaginable stress on their families. Often pharmaceutical drugs treat one symptom only to replace it with others. When a natural herb can be grown easily and cheaply, and can be used with remarkable safety, it is criminal to threaten our most vulnerable citizens with the loss of their property, families, and freedom, for choosing to use it. It is criminal to force these people to pay black market prices, and to ask them to ask their friends and loved ones to risk the same things when they need help to procure their medicine. It is criminal to label these people as somehow deviant for using something which gives them relief from their physical and emotional suffering.

I have personally met dozens of people who benefit medically from marijuana. Chances are very good you know several such people yourself. You have an opportunity before you, to make a real difference for seriously ill people and their loved ones. Please, follow your compassion and vote in support of H.B. 5470.

Thank you for your serious consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,


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